1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL

Spirits

The usual word for spirits is *tevoro* (devil), a word evidently imported by the Tahitian missionaries as *tevolo*. Another word is *timoni* (demon) which seems to be more particularly a Moala word. 775 [177]

Three kinds of *tevoro* are recognized: *tevoro* proper; souls of the dead; *vu*, or *tevoro vu*, the ancestor spirit (*tevoro vu*) of old; Luveniwai, or Children of Water, which are like men, living in the home.

The word for soul (*yalo*) also means mind, disposition, intention; it takes the suffixed possessive—*yalona*. Reduplicated, it means shadow, reflection in the water, picture; it then takes the *O* possessive—*ona yaloyalo*. 774

A boy defined the soul as that whereby we live, move, and speak. Some boys place it in the midrib. The boy who defined the soul also thought that it goes away in sleep and returns in the morning; he did not know where it went, "Sometimes we dream that we shake hands with a person, but we wake up and find he is not there; we have shaken hands with his soul. The souls, though not visible, can see one another (*veirai vakayalo*)."

Another boy believes that when a man is weak and about to die, his soul goes away, either by day or night; it dislikes the body because it is nearly dead, and so refuses to stay in it. A soul that wanders away from the body is called *yalo mbula* (living soul) as opposed to *yalo ni mate* (soul of the dead). 763

It is believed that wraithes sometimes appear shortly before the death of the person, and that if the wraith is called, the person does not die. It is thought that the large green grasshopper (in Mbauan, leaf grasshopper) bears the wraith, and appears to a kinsman when a person is about to die.

It was a moot point whether or not the word *tevoro* applied to wraiths. Wraiths are opposed to true spirits or spirits proper (*tevoro ndina*)—that is the souls of the dead and the *vu*; the true *tevoro* are also opposed to the Children of Water.

The word *tevoro* appears to be used of dead men, not their souls only. My impression is that it is used of the dead lying in the grave, though I have recorded no definite instance. It is sometimes used in the sense of "heathen"; the adjective *vakatevoro* (heathenish) is used of anything which is condemned by the Church from a heathen temple (*mbure vakatevoro*) to free love, which is described as living in heathen style (*tiko vakatevoro*); anything in which *tevoro*, spirits, are concerned is heathenish. 775 196

The old word which *tevoro* and *timoni* have displaced is *kalou*, which is now chiefly used to designate the Christian God, sometimes the Fijian gods (*kalou Vakaviti*). The word *kalou* is not now used of ghosts; but when 776 196

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

after first intercourse at marriage, at the pregnancy ceremony, and after childbirth; boys do so after circumcision; and both sexes do so after an illness. Smoke is used to protect a turtle net against the pernicious influence of the glance or touch of a pregnant or a menstruating woman.

THE DOUBLE SOUL

The superhuman world of the Lauan is peopled not only by spirits and ancestor ghosts but also by the disembodied souls of the living. These disembodied souls are still just as real to them as humans. They appear at any time of day or night, frequently in human form, but also in the form of animals, fish, or birds. Some are friendly and aid them in life, others are hostile and greatly feared.

Each human being has two souls, a good soul (*yalo vinaka*) and a bad soul (*yalo tha*). The bad soul occasionally leaves the body of a living being, who remains unaware of its absence, and wanders about playing tricks on unsuspecting human victims. Such a bad soul appears in the physical form of the human being to whom it belongs, and can be identified only by its ability to vanish. The victim mistakes the bad soul for its owner and is lured into danger or death. For instance, Ndakai was walking down a rocky path on Kambara. He met a man and began to talk to him. Ndakai fell and broke his leg. He looked around but the man had vanished, so Ndakai knew that he had been talking to the man's bad soul, which had caused him to slip.

Illness is often due to the absence of the good soul. If it returns the patient recovers, otherwise he dies (23, p. 128). When a person dies his good soul goes to Nai Thimbathimba where it starts on the journey to the abode of the dead (pp. 114-115). His bad soul frequently remains, at least for a short time, near his home on earth and frightens human being.

ABODE OF THE DEAD

There are conflicting beliefs concerning the destiny and abode of the soul (*yalo*) after death. The dominant belief, introduced by the chiefs' group, is that when a man dies his soul goes to Nai Thimbathimba, a "jumping-off" place found on or near each island, usually facing the west or northwest. From here the soul goes to Nai Thombothombo, the land of souls, (*vanua ni yalo*) located on the Mbua coast, Vanua Levu (fig. 1). The natives say that a person near Nai Thombothombo cannot sleep or hear his own voice because of the noise.

Nai Thimbathimba of the Kambara and Wangava people is a high rock located on the west point of Wangava (fig. 2, 17). There the souls call for a wave which transports them to Nai Thombothombo.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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159 the genealogies of most of the clans on the island and could trace his clan genealogy back about ten generations.

159 Although highly respected as a personality, Tchosaia had
558 lost prestige as an island chief on account of the newly created
622 political offices. He was in direct line of succession, but was
178 never installed as chief of Kambara because of the *mbuliship*, according to informants. Formerly, the chief of an important island like Kambara received the first fruits of the harvest from the whole island. First fruits are no longer presented regularly on Kambara. When we were there, however, he received one-half of the first fruits of one village (Tokalau) only. The other half was presented to the highest government officer of the village, namely the village headman. This loss of prestige is keenly felt by Tchosaia, who is a reactionary. He is the only man on the island who does not attend the mission church.

159 To compensate for his diminishing power, Tchosaia has
756 become a prominent medicine man. He specializes in cases of "spirit possession" and "soul loss" (see page 129) and his cures are effected mainly by supernatural means. Hence he
● [774] is feared in the community, not only because of his chiefly "mana" but also because of his control of the spirit world.
[787] When we had known Tchosaia some time he told us how he received his medicines. One night, when he was about fifty years of age, two of his ancestor gods appeared to him. They gave him "mana" and medicine to cure the sick. Since that time he has been a successful witch doctor.

159 The case of Tchosaia, the titular chief of Kambara, shows
554 how one individual has met the problems caused by changing
622 standards of prestige in Lau. A different type of adjustment has been made by the chief of Mothe. Although neither the chief nor a member of his clan holds the *mbuliship* on Mothe, the chief of Mothe has retained more prerogatives than has the chief of Kambara. He is still installed, according to the traditional ceremony of binding a piece of tapa about the

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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CHAPTER V

HOW A FIJIAN SEES THE WORLD

WHERE GHOSTS HOLD SWAY

Mana! E....ntchina! A....munduo....A..
..munduo!

Mana, may it be true, may it be effective!

End of a Lauan prayer.

THE LAUANS still live in a world of magic peopled by ghosts, spirits, and the disembodied souls of the living, for the Christian cosmogony, introduced by the missionaries, had a place for local gods. Even today these superhuman beings are just as real as human beings, and play as important a rôle in their lives. They appear at any time of day or night, frequently in human form, but also in plants, fish, or birds. Some are friendly and aid them in their struggle for success in life, but many are hostile and greatly feared.

The Lauans believe that each individual has two souls, one good and one bad. The bad soul occasionally separates itself from the body of a person (who remains unaware of its absence) and wanders about playing tricks on unsuspecting human victims. Such a bad soul appears in the physical form of the person to whom it belongs, so that the victim mistakes the bad soul for its owner. The bad soul then lures him into danger, and at times death, and can be discovered only by its ability to vanish into air.

One afternoon our native boy, Ravu, went into the jungle to shoot wild pigeons for the evening meal. Although wild fowl are plentiful on Kambara, they are difficult to shoot because they perch in the high tree tops where the fruit grows. Moreover, the floor of the limestone basin is full of pits and so rough that it cuts even the natives' tough feet, calloused as they are

3:Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

774 to a depth of half-an-inch from walking barefoot. At sundown, Ravu had not returned, and we were worried, for night descends early in the shadowy tropical jungle. When the last rays of the setting sun still cast a red glow over the village, the forest is already in darkness. We called a few natives together and, armed with lanterns and flashlights, set out to look for him. The searching party, in a long line, followed the narrow path up the steep cliff and into the dense jungle.

We shouted at intervals but there was no response. Finally, from afar we heard a shot. Picking our way in the twilight off the rough path into the primeval forest, we followed the sound. Suddenly we came upon Ravu, his body shaking with fear, his face pale and terrified. When he saw us his expression changed to one of great relief. Finally he was able to tell his story.

For some time in the early afternoon he had looked for pigeons without seeing any. Suddenly he had come upon Wangga, a man from Tanggu. He told Wangga he was searching for fowl, and Wangga said: "I know where there are many. Come with me." So Ravu followed him. They walked a great distance through the pathless jungle and Ravu became very tired. But there were no fowl. Finally they reached cliffs which rim the island and drop abruptly into the sea. Wangga stood on the edge of a sheer precipice and called Ravu to join him, but Ravu was frightened and decided to turn back. His companion returned with him. When they were approaching the spot where they had met, Ravu heard our shouts. He fired a shot into the air and Wangga started to run away. Suddenly the man vanished. Then Ravu realized that it was Wangga's bad soul which had tried to lure him to death over the cliff. Ravu did not recover his composure until the following day.

577 As a motivating force, kindness and humanitarianism are still foreign to the Lauan. This was illustrated forcibly one

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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before the priest a dish of scented oil, with which he anoints himself, and then receives the tooth, regarding it with deep and serious attention. Unbroken silence follows. The priest becomes absorbed in thought, and all eyes watch him with unblinking steadiness. In a few minutes he trembles; slight distortions are seen in his face, and twitching movements in his limbs. These increase to a violent muscular action, which spreads until the whole frame is strongly convulsed, and the man shivers as with a strong ague fit. In some instances this is accompanied with murmurs and sobs, and veins are greatly enlarged, and the circulation of the blood quickened. The priest is now possessed by his god, and all his words and actions are considered as no longer his own, but those of the deity who has entered into him. Shrill cries of *'Koi au! Koi au!'* (It is I! It is I!) fill the air, and the god is supposed thus to notify his approach. While giving the answer the priest's eyes stand out and roll as in a frenzy; his voice is unnatural, his face pale, his lips livid, his breathing depressed, and his entire appearance like that of a furious madman. The sweat runs from every pore, and tears start from his strained eyes; after which the symptoms gradually disappear . . ."[47]

The success of the clan in warfare, its strength, man power, and wealth were derived from the "mana" of its ancestral gods. This clan "mana" was concentrated in the clan "old head" (that is, the first born direct male descendant of the first son of the founder). The high chief of Lau has the most "mana" of any living person. Theoretically the direct descendant of the highest ancestral god, he is considered to be the most sacred living being.

The ancestral gods formed a sort of celestial hierarchy which was reflected in the system of ranked clans in Lauan society. Ndengei (pronounced En-deng-ē'), the great snake god of Viti Levu and mythical originator of the upper class in Lau, stood at the top of the set-up. Tradition says that many generations

[47] Williams and Calvert, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 224-225.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

575 enters his votary the men begin to shake and tremble violently.
776 Their flesh twitches. They begin to dance and work them-
782 selves up into a frenzy. Some club one another. In this state they are insensible to pain. Men are frequently injured and were in the past occasionally killed during these rites. While possessed they receive "mana" from their guardian spirits in the form of inspiration, each along the lines of his own specialty.

[774] The member with the most "mana" on each island is the leader of the cult. If he is challenged, a contest is held during the rites and the least vulnerable wins and takes over the leadership.

The "Water Baby" cult found its way into southern Lau from Fiji proper. Mr. Brewster, who spent forty years as a government official in Fiji, has described the cult as it appeared in the interior of Viti Levu where it was strong at the end of the nineteenth century and still practiced in the 1920's.[49]

797 The early missionaries ignored the cult. Compared to more
575 violent practices which they had to combat, such as cannibalism, widow strangling, and human sacrifice, it seemed relatively harmless except that it encouraged laziness and frequently led to bloodshed. However, when the mission had become well established in Fiji they demanded its suppression. The colonial government followed mission policy and made the practice criminal.

Mr. Brewster's comments on government policy concerning the cult are interesting. He wrote: ". . . looking down that long vista of years and after much reflection, I think that we took a wrong view of the *luveniwai*. There was no need to regard it so seriously, as in my opinion it was not really seditious. It led the boys to be cheeky and insubordinate, and to a certain amount of larceny . . . There were plenty of native regulations against insubordination, disobedience and any sort of disturbance. We did not need anything special

[49] A. B. Brewster, op. cit., pp. 222-229.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

her!' A burst of laughter from the spectators, in which the husband outlaughed the whole, followed this remark. The treatment was most successful. The woman's pride was so strong that she at once sat up, assuring us that the god had gone away, and that she needed no more medicine."[59]

A patient on the verge of death can be restored to health if his soul, which has wandered away from his body, can be captured by a specialist in soul-catching, and returned to his body. Once Sienga of Lomatchi, a young unmarried woman, was very ill. Kama, the doctor, gave her medicine (called *wai ni thavuyalo*) but she grew worse. Then the doctor decided to try to catch her soul. He cut the tender new shoot from the center of a banana tree in the garden land. He took the shoot to the bush, unfolded it slightly, stood it on the ground and let it fall. Then he picked it up and set out in the direction toward which the shoot had fallen. Suddenly the doctor saw the girl's soul which he said looked just like the girl, seated and leaning against a tree. Since she faced him he knew she could be captured. If the soul had been facing the tree he would have known that he could not capture her and the patient would die. Standing in front of the soul, he pointed the banana shoot toward her and the soul entered the shoot. The doctor carried the shoot with its heavy burden on his shoulder to Lomatchi. When he reached the village he stood the shoot on the ground and let it fall in the direction of the patient's house so that the soul could escape and enter the house. When the shoot became lighter in weight he knew the soul had left it. He went to the patient and gave her another dose of medicine (called *wai ni thavuyalo*). The patient felt better immediately and he knew her soul had re-entered her body. After a few weeks the girl recovered completely.

Certain types of illness such as strokes, paralysis, internal swellings, and prolonged pains are attributed to sorcery

[59] Thomas Williams and J. Calvert, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 120. (ndraunikau).

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date)1918
OQ6 Lau OQ6

carried in the mat he had rolled himself up in because of the mosquitoes, to the top of Delai-dradramua Hill. Sorely was he troubled on opening his eyes just before cock-crow to see the stars above him in the open sky; and his father took great gifts to the home of the grey rat to ask the mind of Adi Mailagi as to this thing. But the only answer was 'Semesa is free—let him live'; so that we never really knew what was the meaning of it. For always is she hard in in spirit and one to be feared.

"Often does she take the shades of quite small children away with her in her palm-leaf basket, and then the children themselves fall sick in their homes; and unless their shades can escape from her and run home again those children must surely die.

"Tui Merike, the deaf-mute of Oneata Island, is known to you, sir—a man but ill-favoured in countenance and to whom, therefore, Adi Mailagi once appeared in the guise of an old woman; yet he escaped and is alive to-day. The tale of it runs thus: He was slowly riding at dusk one day on his pony from Loma Loma to Mualevu, when from behind a tree that he had just passed near Uruone town there came an evil-looking dame who called out, 'Whither goest?'

"At this the pony shied furiously and sweated with fear, so that Tui Merike knew that it was indeed the goddess, and without replying he